
TOPIC**Staff Meeting(s) with Developer****Date introduced: December 9, 2009**

Introduction

Planner Aaker explained the current development review process noting that presently there is a pre-application process with the Planner where submission criteria and intent are reviewed. Planner Aaker said depending on the application that typically there are a number of meetings with the developer that includes a variety of city staff to address any concerns up-front prior to Planning Commission review.

ZOUC Members agreed that in their opinion there hasn't been a problem perceived by them with regard to the application process. The Committee further noted that at times the PC receives too much information at the preliminary review level of a project. Members expressed the opinion that plans have become so detailed that by the time of Commission review the applicant has invested so heavily in the plans that it is difficult to be flexible and possibly change direction. This concern will be addressed in the Sketch Plan Review discussion.

Action

Preliminary draft recommendation to make no changes to current staff/developer meeting process.

Date continued: January 13, 2010

TOPIC:**Staff Meeting(s) with Developer****Date Introduced: December 9, 2009****Date Continued: January 13, 2010**

No change.

TOPIC Requiring Neighborhood Meetings with Developer(s):

Date Introduced: December 9, 2009

Introduction

Chair Fischer said that at the Commission level residents have mentioned that they didn't hear, or didn't hear soon enough that an application was made to develop or redevelop within their area. Chair Fischer raised the question if neighborhood meetings should be required for all development applications by ordinance. Planner Aaker further explained that all residents are notified in some form that a redevelopment application was made. First, a sign is required 10-day prior to the meeting of the Planning Commission, Second, since both the Planning Commission and City Council hold public hearings neighbors that reside within 1000 feet of a project are notified via mail; third, publication in the Edina Sun Current.

City Attorney Knutson stated that neighborhood meetings could be required by ordinance. Mr. Knutson added, however; that none of the cities he works with require neighborhood meetings by ordinance. This is generally left up to the discretion of the City Planner to suggest such meetings. Continuing, Mr. Knutson said that it is in the best interest of the applicant to heed the advice of the Planner since he/she usually knows if a project would be of interest to neighbors. Concluding, Mr. Knutson added that requiring meetings by ordinance may add an unnecessary step.

A discussion ensued with Planner Aaker further explaining that presently staff suggests neighborhood meetings where appropriate. Planner Aaker pointed out if this becomes an ordinance requirement the applicant would need to verify to city staff that they conducted the neighborhood meeting.

Further discussion occurred with ZOUC Members agreeing that requiring a neighborhood meeting may be a topic of discussion as part of a possible PUD process.

Action

Preliminary draft recommendation to keep the current process of a common sense approach to suggest that developers meet with neighbors when appropriate. This seems to work without adding an undue burden on the applicant.

Date Continued: January 13, 2010

TOPIC: **Requiring Neighborhood Meetings with Developer(s):**

Date Introduced: **December 9, 2009**

Date Continued: **January 13, 2010**

Discussion:

Member Forrest commented that she remembers from a past Planning Commission meeting regarding Interlachen Country Club (ICC) that when the plans were revised impacted neighbors were not notified of the change in a timely fashion. Planner Teague agreed, adding traditionally ICC held neighborhood meetings prior to an application, but in this instance since the “maintenance building project” was on-going the neighborhood meeting informing the closest neighbors of the revised plans wasn’t done in a timely fashion due to time constraints. Continuing, Planner Teague reported that residents within 1,000 feet of ICC boundaries had always “been in the loop”; however the change in building location developed quickly and unless residents were watching the Planning Commission meetings on TV they were not aware a change in location was discussed and a real possibility.

Member Carpenter stated it appeared to him from past discussions on this topic that 90% of applicants hold neighborhood meetings either prior to an application being submitted or before the meeting of the Planning Commission. Planner Teague agreed with that statement. Member Carpenter said in his opinion the ordinance doesn’t need to be amended requiring neighborhood meetings by an applicant.

Member Staunton stated if the goal is greater transparency and a better understanding of the process to ensure greater resident participation the City needs to decide on where the public hearing is conducted; residents need to know where to go. Continuing, Commissioner Staunton said if the ordinance were amended to add more requirements the development process would need to be clearer and greater “policing” of the “new” requirements would be needed.

Chair Fischer commented that if the City already achieves 90% volunteerism from developers that in his opinion changing the ordinance would just add an additional step in the process. Chair Fischer said it appears the City knows before hand if they are dealing with a developer that is interested in communicating not only with City staff but with the community. Continuing, Chair Fischer said that certainly there are merits in requiring that a developer hold a neighborhood meeting; however, it appears to him from past experience that the approach the City has taken works well and would continue to work well.

A brief discussion ensued with Members agreeing that requiring by ordinance that an applicant/developer hold a neighborhood meeting remain as is; at the suggestion of staff.

Action

No change. Keep the process as is; recommending to the applicant that they meet with neighbors is left to the discretion of staff.